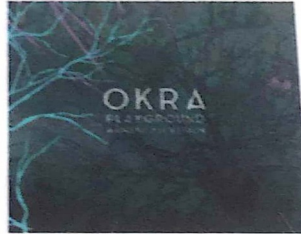


.....
OKRA PLAYGROUND



Ääneni Yli Vesien

(NORDIC NOTES) www.nordic-notes.de



Two years on from *Turmio* and the Finnish supergroup, fronted by the three female singers, Päivi Hirvonen, Maija Bucket and Essi

Vendace, have preserved their debut's

Scanned by CamScanner

exhilarating style of musical alchemy. However, it is the traditional elements, exemplified by the use of the *kantele*, accordion and bowed lyre that are to the fore with the programmed sounds and rhythms adding an energetic twist.

The mystical flavour of the lyrics is a signifier of the band's roots in Finnish folk music. These tackle subjects as common place as the arrival of spring, in 'Kevat', and the role of the moon in influencing life events, during 'Kuun Ajo'. Matters turn more introspective for the title track in which the protagonist forlornly states: *'I hope my voice will carry over the water/so that I might be heard and my call answered/But the wind brings no answers.'* Such stories of falling in love, subsequent disappointment and eventual survival are echoed in 'Yhdeksän Kuuta' and 'Juoruaja' but not all is gloomy and for each sad story there is an uplifting rebuttal.

These narratives are made all the more compelling by the delicious vocals that recall the work of those other giants of vocal harmony, Värttinä, though Okra Playground often enjoy a more vigorous musical backdrop.

Simon Rowland

Scanned by CamScanner